

11. UNUSUAL NESTING OF REDWATTLED LAPWING (*VANELLUS INDICUS*)

Behind our house in Panchwati at Udaipur there is a three storeyed building belonging to a school. The roof of this building is of asbestos cement sheets. Two Redwattled lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*) were usually seen perched atop this roof at the beginning of May protesting and attacking birds of prey.

In the morning of 14th May, 1981 we saw one of the lapwings with four chicks at the edge of the roof. For five days we saw these chicks frequently with the lapwing at the edge of the roof. On the 6th day two chicks fell

down from the roof and died; on the 10th day the other two landed safely on the ground.

Near our house there are barren grounds as well as a deep and dry nullah over 100 feet wide and 10 ft. deep. The walls of the nullah are quite high and men seldom venture inside it. In spite of all these safe grounds and flat roofed buildings being available why this pair of lapwings chose the sloping and uneven roof of the school building for nesting is a puzzle. Though there are some stray dogs and domestic cats in the vicinity the nearby nullah is not visited by any of these predators and is certainly safer than the roof.

41, PANCHWATI, UDAIPUR,  
RAJASTHAN,  
June 19, 1981.

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12. COLLECTIVE DEFENSIVE STRATEGY IN BLUE ROCK PIGEON (*COLUMBA LIVIA*)

About 40 km from Udaipur there is a township called Gogunda. On the outskirts of this township and near the bus stand, there is a slight slope on the road which is followed by 200 metres of straight road, on both sides of which there are big trees. From this vantage point near the bus stand I was watching a crested hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*) circling clockwise in the sky. As it neared the treetops about 35 blue rock pigeon (*Columba livia*) took fright and flew away. Then the flock turned and started circling anti-clockwise on the same plane as that of crested hawk-eagle.

The eagle widened its circles and started gaining height. The pigeons followed suit. When they crossed each other some pigeons brushed past the eagle and sometimes they flew so threateningly that the eagle had to change its course to avoid head-on collision. This went on for about 10 minutes during which the birds reached very high altitudes and their circles widened further. At this point when the eagle and pigeons were farthest apart in the circle the pigeons dropped vertically towards the ground and within no time settled on the trees having eluded the predator.

41, PANCHWATI,  
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